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OUR MORAL DUTY

The War for Independence is being waged with increasing efficiency and success by the Army of the Irish Republic. Cork Volunteers have added to their many brilliant victories by the capture and destruction of the strongly fortified and garrisoned enemy fortress at Rosscarbery, a task of immense difficulty and danger. From every part of the country come reports of notable exploits by Volunteers. It should be remembered that many Volunteer activities which are not of a spectacular kind and receive little publicity are none the less of real military importance. Incessant cutting of roads, breaking of bridges, raiding of enemy mails and such like harrasing tactics are branches of a guerilla offensive which are practical anywhere. Even in those parts where the organisation and equipment of the Volunteers is still in a backward condition minor activities of this kind are still feasible and should be persistently carried out. In the process Volunteers will receive, a practical training which should help in fitting them for bigger operations. The more incessant, the more widespread our activities, large and small, the graver will be the military problem for the enemy. He should not get a day's rest in any Brigade area in Ireland. He must be kept on the run. Already his troops are showing unmistakeable signs of feeling the strain; his resources are taxed to the utmost; and the grave industrial trouble in England presents a favourable opportunity for a particularly effective general offensive. It is particularly desirable that the inactive areas should get busy at the present time before the summer is on us. All should realise that by industry, courage, energy and self-sacrifice at the present time we may avert much suffering from our people in times to come. In this great national fight against a brutal enemy, a fight in which the freedom and happiness of our nation and all that makes life worth living are at stake, every young man should deem it a privilege to give the best service of head and hand to

the Republican State. All the people of Ireland must be taught that having created the Republic by their freely given votes they must in this war for national existence be prepared to place themselves and their possessions ungrudgingly at its disposal.

All who preach a different doctrine, all who endeavour by word or deed to weaken or impede the soldiers of Ireland in their duty to their country, are acting the part of traitors to their country who in time of war are helping and encouraging the enemy. It is a war between Ireland and England; Ireland is fighting for her life; and all who are not with her soldiers in the fight are consciously or unconsciously acting the part of enemies of Ireland.

The situation is made abundantly clear in the statement made by the President of the Irish Republic to the representative of the International Press of America on March 30th. Part of that interview has been reproduced in the Irish Daily Press; but certain vital parts of his statement have been suppressed and we deem it important to reproduce them for the information and encouragement of Volunteers. This statement by our President should be given the widest publicity. Volunteers should circulate it in those quarters where it is likely to have a good effect. It will afford an effective answer to the enemy's lying propaganda, to the false rumours and forgeries which he is assiduously circulating, and a remedy for the delusions into which the old slavish traditions have led some of the older generation.

"The Army of the Irish Republic," said the President, "is a regular state force under the civil control of the elected representatives, of the people, with an organisation and discipline imposed by these representatives, and under officers who hold their commissions under warrant from these representatives. The government is, therefore, responsible for the actions of this army. These actions are not the acts of irresponsible individuals or groups therefore, nor is the

I.R.A., as the enemy would have one believe, a pretorian guard. It is the national army of defence."

"Do you consider the ambushing of the British forces justifiable?" the interviewer asked.

"Certainly" answered the President. "If the Irish nation and the Irish Republic as a state directly founded upon the consent and the will of the people is not entitled to use force to defend itself, then no nation and no state is entitled to use force. The English forces are in our country as invaders, on a war-footing as they themselves have declared, in fact actually waging upon us not only an unjust but a barbarous war. Protected by the most modern war-appliances, they swoop down upon us and kill and burn and loot and outrage—why should it be wrong of us to do our utmost to see that that they will not do these things with impunity?"

"If they may use their tanks and steel-armoured cars, why should we hesitate to use the cover of stone walls and ditches? Why should the use of the element of surprise be denied to us apart from the fact that we are a nation unjustly attacked and defending a most sacred right—every army uses it. For us not to use it if we purposed defending ourselves at all would be stupid. If German forces had landed in England during the recent war, would it have been wrong for Englishmen to surprise them? Would it have been held wrong for Englishmen to harass the invader by every means in their power? If not wrong for Englishmen, why wrong for us?"

"It is only people who are completely ignorant of the circumstances, or who are blinded with partisanship, or those who but half think, or who do not dare to think, that talk as if there was something inherently criminal in an ambush.

"The English Government has selected its terminology of vilification and the neutral press has fallen into the habit of accepting it.

"It makes no matter that there is a very simple criterion by which it can be tested which side is right and which side is wrong in this contest. It makes no matter that the whole struggle could be terminated to-morrow by the withdrawal of the English forces which have no right here whatever and are obviously the aggressors, these forces will still continue to be called 'the forces of law and order,' and for Irishmen to defend themselves against them will be 'crime' and 'outrage' and

'murder.'—However, the world will not be fooled all the time."

"Has Dáil Eireann formally declared war?" the interviewer asked.

"A formal declaration of war by us has not been necessary" said Mr. de Valera. "The occupation of our country by the English despite the will of the people has meant a state of virtual war always. The recent acts of the English are unmistakeable acts of war. In their formal proclamations too they have explicitly stated that they are at war. We have simply accepted the state that has been forced upon us, and are defending ourselves to the best of our ability, which we shall continue to do *as long as a British soldier remains on our soil.*"

GENERAL NOTES

The following decree was passed by Dáil Eireann at its March session:—

"WHEREAS the British Government through its army of invasion and occupation is about to attempt to take a census of population of this country;

"AND WHEREAS such taking of census is a usurpation of the right of the Irish people,

"AND WHEREAS the returns could be used by the enemy against Irish citizens;

"NOW IT IS HEREBY DECREED BY DAIL EIREANN in session assembled that the people of Ireland will not make any census returns whatever to the British Government or to its agents."

Since the publication of this decree the enemy Government has decided to abandon its attempt to take a census in Ireland against the will of the Irish Republic.

Official figures have been issued by the enemy government with regard to emigration from Ireland tending to show an alarming increase in emigrants. We are in possession of information which shows that the figures are greatly exaggerated. The actual figures are not anything like so high. The publication of these false figures is a piece of enemy propaganda designed to discourage Volunteers and encourage intending emigrants. This fact should be given the widest circulation. Full information on this matter will shortly be made public.

A new device of the enemy is the employment of spies as "prisoners" in the internment camps and prisons. These men are mixed with the prisoners with instructions to represent themselves as enthusiastic

Volunteers and by entering into confidential conversation with the interned or imprisoned Volunteers to endeavour to elicit information from them. We are in possession of definite details with regard to some such cases. Warning should be given to all prisoners to be on their guard against any fellow-prisoner of whose identity and real history they have no evidence but his own statements.

The latest device of enemy propaganda is the issue to the English and foreign Press of forged copies of the "Irish Bulletin", the official organ of Dáil Eireann. The bogus copies contain matter intended to make the Republican cause odious and ridiculous. This contemptible trick has been promptly exposed and is only interesting as showing the despicable depths to which the enemy will sink in his desperation.

The enemy published a story of a "fight" in the Dublin mountains near Ticknock, between his forces and Republicans who "mingled with crowds of women and children, so that they could not be fired on." The report is a lie. There was no Volunteer on the mountain. There were only parties of holiday-makers and picnickers when fifty Auxiliaries arrived, took up positions and commenced firing on men, women and children. Fortunately their marksmanship was as defective as their chivalry.

In view of this enemy lie it is interesting to reproduce the following from the report of an ambush in Stillorgan, which is typical of a number of others:—"The R.I.C. retreated; one of the left flankers then fired and hit one of the enemy and another man of the flanking party threw a bomb which hit a member of the patrol between the shoulders fell on the ground and exploded. The R.I.C. retreated into a crowd of children and our fire had to cease."

Excellent work was done in the engagement near Dunganran on March 19th. In the first combat a body of enemy soldiers were routed, three were captured (including the O.C.) as well as a Ford car (which was partly destroyed) a number of rifles, revolvers and ammunition and 25 Mills bombs. In the second engagement some hours later the enemy after a stubborn fight were forced to retire and leave their Crossley car which was burned.

A BRILLIANT COUP

The Millstreet Train Ambush on February 11th. was a model operation in many respects. The most instructive thing will be to analyse the Report of the Officer in command on that occasion. The vital quotations from his Report are:

"The local Coy's O.C's got the intelligence and worked up the plans: the A.S.U. came to their assistance to perfect and work up the attack." This

is the proper way to work: *the man on the spot collects the information and makes the initial arrangements.* If he needs extra help the neighbouring units must be ready and willing to give it promptly. *Good contact and intelligent co-operation between units are of vital importance.*

"Two men from —Company had instructions to watch train and if it contained Enemy forces to board the engine as soon as the driver moved from Rathcoole station and order him to stop at a certain point where a signal was placed . . . In order to be more accurate about the strength and equipment of the enemy on train, one of the men met the train at Banteer Station having more time at this station to examine carefully their strength and the compartments they occupied—The other man waiting in the meantime at Rathcoole Station with both revolvers" These arrangements practically embrace all the principles of careful reconnaissance—*early information, accurate information, minimum of risk to reconnoitring party, precautions to make sure of getting back with report etc.*

So far the principles underlying the operation were plain and general—applicable to either day or night work, according as the circumstances called for it. But this was a Night Operation—the time was about 7 p.m. on the night of the 11th—12th February; so that it was *necessary to co-ordinate operations and do away with all uncertainty likely to arise in the darkness.*

The main problem was to have the train halted at the proper place. "Both men thoroughly knew the cutting where train was to be stopped and with the assistance of a lamp placed on the bank at the left-hand side of the Railway brought the train to a standstill just at this point—the ambush party being posted on either side."

There was only one other point to take account of—to *make sure the lamp signal was given in sufficient time.* "The signal for exposing the light on the bank was a whistle from the engine, which they ordered the driver to give a quarter of a mile before the train reached the cutting." The last possible chance of a mistake was thus eliminated as far as human beings could do so. The success—capture of 14 rifles—was deserved if ever a success was. Especially as the numbers—twelve in ambush party plus two on the engine—were only equal to the defenders.

A SAMPLE OF ALERT READINESS

"In war luck in the long run is with the efficient." This saying of Moltke should be borne in mind by our troops. At one time or another every one of our best units has been sadly disappointed because the enemy failed to turn up when we were ready for him.



There is only one way out of the difficulty—we must try and be always ready for him. Here is an extract from a report that gives an indication of how good results might be obtained.

“Acting on intelligence received re two lorries of Black-and-Tans that occasionally travelled from X to Y returning by same rout, I moved to a point near Z at 3 a.m. on — morning. As it was considered speculative whether the lorries would travel or not we waited until a scout reported that they passed on to Y at 12 noon. We then moved on to our position and waited till they returned at 3 p.m.

First of all observe we have information of a sort—correct in a general way but not exact or detailed. Very properly the responsible Officer does not definitely commit his force to any line of action on such grounds: but at the same time he gets ready to avail of any chance that turns up. Accordingly he takes up what the Germans very suitably call “a Position in Readiness” independently of what the enemy does. He occupies a good resting-place within easy reach of his Action Stations, and flanking the enemy’s line of march at convenient distance. He keeps his scouts on the alert and is able to move into position in ample time to make complete final preparations. His carefulness was rewarded as it deserved. Both enemy lorries were wrecked and all occupants killed, nine rifles and 200 rounds of ammunition were captured.

A word about the “Position in Readiness”—because, remember, the Germans are seldom wrong in war. Such an arrangement does not unduly fatigue the men or compel them to be always “at the ready”—like Black-and-Tans in a Crossly. That is a “Position in *Nerviness*” and is very bad. The Position in Redainess requires only Outposts to be on the alert, with the main force able to act in any way the Commander thinks fit—to advance, to retire, to make a flank march, to dig in—in a word to adopt the form of action demanded by the circumstances.

Such a method of procedure will often be the most suitable for our troops. If it is intelligently applied and backed up by the best Information that can be obtained—and both these requirements are obtainable—it offers far better chances of success than more or less aimless ranging of an area, it is far less tiring on the men, and it affords ample opportunities for improving their training.

SCOUTING

The Intelligence Dept. of any Army or fighting force is the most important branch of that force. Since no force can act efficiently without satisfactory information, and as the main portion of the fundamental necessary information must come from either our cyclist or infantry scouts it is fairly obvious that

these scouts are the EYES of whatever force to which they are attached.

According to this line of argument any force which has not got a complement of thoroughly good and efficient scouts will always be in the unhappy position of acting in a blind manner. Now no matter how high their state of efficiency in other branches may be it will be found that this force will not only be of no use to the main army but that it will be a hindrance and a constant danger to it. In order to avoid this terrible dilemma battalion commanders must take immediate steps to bring the intelligence and scouting departments of their commands up to the highest possible state of efficiency, and in order to do this properly they must investigate their present system and reorganise it systematically.

When selecting men for training as scouts Commandants must ensure that the men selected have the following necessary attributes: Good hearing, good eyesight, initiative, ability to walk and run quickly, they must be good rifle and revolver or pistol shots, they should be able to cycle; a working knowledge of motor cars and motor cycles is at all times a decided advantage.

The training of scouts is very difficult and in order to obtain the best and most advantageous results no part of the approved training should be overlooked, there should be little or no difficulty in delivering the necessary lectures but the practical outdoor training will entail a certain amount of difficulty which can be surmounted however by a keen, competent instructor.

For the purpose of training the following schedule will be found to be useful—INDOOR WORK—OUTDOOR WORK—DAY WORK AND NIGHT WORK.

Indoor Lecture on the importance of their work. Map-reading, Writing of reports, copy and enlarge maps

Outdoor Judging distance, identifying country from maps. Reconnaissance of Roads, Rivers, Railways and villages. Field sketching, writing messages.

Day Work Cross country work. Observation and reporting on situations. How to take cover and observe without being seen. Field practices and memory tests, Show patrol formations.

Night Work. Finding the way at night. Marching on a compass bearing. Finding the way in woods. Identifications of sounds at night.

Eye for Ground. Where to Go:— The scout should choose some good point of view with a covered approach and a second line of retreat.

How to Go:— The object of his mission must always be kept in mind and a definite plan made. The route selected should lie along dead ground. Always avoid a skyline.

How to Return:— A good scout will on his way out, note his direction, and landmarks likely to aid his return.